

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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September 25, 2019

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to express our opposition to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking published by the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission”) regarding the universal service contribution methodology<sup>1</sup> in response to the Commission’s proposal to cap the Universal Service Fund (“USF”) programs, which would harm communities of color, including low-income Asian American and Pacific Islander (“AAPI”) families and households.

Americans need high-speed internet access to live and work in the 21st Century. People depend on digital connection to find job opportunities, access critical emergency services, complete their homework and much more. The USF programs are instrumental in the movement to bridge the digital divide in the United States, which is estimated to impact as many as 162.8 million Americans.<sup>2</sup> The overall cap would harm the federal Lifeline program, a critical USF program, which for years has experienced low utilization rates.<sup>3</sup>

We urge you to consider the overall cap’s potential impact on low-income AAPI families and households. Indicators of the digital divide, including education, income level, and English proficiency, illustrate striking disparities within the community and suggest that a gap in access exists among different ethnic groups.<sup>4</sup> This is further demonstrated by significant AAPI enrollment in welfare programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid, which, as you know, qualify a household for Lifeline.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *In the Matter of Universal Service Contribution Methodology*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 84 Federal Register 27570 (June 13, 2019) (“Universal Service Contribution Methodology”).

<sup>2</sup> *It’s time for a new approach to mapping broadband data to better serve Americans*. John Kahan. <https://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2019/04/08/its-time-for-a-new-approach-for-mapping-broadband-data-to-better-serve-americans/>.

<sup>3</sup> *Lifeline Participation*, United Service Administrative Co., <https://www.usac.org/li/about/process-overview/stats/participation.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> Reply Comments of Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC, Filipina Women’s Network, and Japanese American Citizens League. *In the Matter of Universal Service Contribution Methodology* (August 26, 2019). [https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10826414403159/USF%20Cap%20Reply%20Comments\\_AAJC\\_FWN\\_JACL.pdf](https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10826414403159/USF%20Cap%20Reply%20Comments_AAJC_FWN_JACL.pdf).

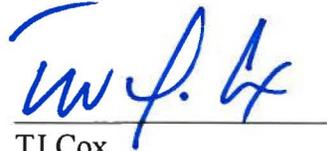
<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 4.

If enacted, an overall cap on the USF programs will undermine the ability of low-income AAPI families and households to enroll in Lifeline and attain a higher standard of living. Therefore, on behalf of our constituents and communities, we urge the Commission to signal its commitment to universal service by rejecting the proposed cap.

Sincerely,



Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



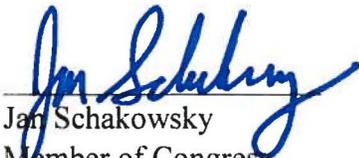
TJ Cox  
Member of Congress



Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



Ed Case  
Member of Congress



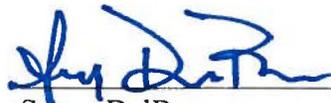
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Katie Porter  
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Ted W. Lieu  
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Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal  
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Member of Congress

CC: Commissioner Carr  
Commissioner O'Reilly  
Commissioner Rosenworcel  
Commissioner Starks